

India Edwards

Vivian Hagerty
University Laboratory High School, Urbana
Teacher: Adele Suslick

India Edwards was born to Archibald Walker and India Thomas Walker on June 16, 1895, in Chicago, Illinois. She became an advocate for women and helped secure governmental jobs for them. She herself became a close advisor to President Harry Truman and encouraged him to appoint women to government positions.

In December 1917, India married Daniel Sharp. Unfortunately, he was killed the following year while fighting in World War I, and India sought employment outside the house. In 1918, she started writing for the Chicago Tribune. For her first eighteen years at the Tribune, she worked as the society editor, and for the last six years, she edited the Women's Page. In 1921 while still at the Chicago Tribune, India married Jack Moffet. The couple had two children but divorced in 1937. Five years later in 1942, she married Herbert Threkeld Edwards. Since Herbert worked for the State Department, the couple moved to Washington, D.C..

Shortly after this move, India began campaigning for the Democratic Party in the 1944 election. Running in that election was Governor Thomas Dewey, Republican, from New York, and President Franklin Roosevelt, Democrat, who was seeking re-election after three terms in the White House. She wrote speeches, radio scripts, and publicity releases, supported women's political rights, and worked without pay. After the election, she volunteered for the women's division of the Democratic National Committee.

India soon became a prominent figure in politics. In 1945, she served as executive secretary of the women's division of the Democratic National Convention.

India was often bothered by the careless way some male politicians acted towards women, and she found ways to provide women with better political and government jobs normally held by men. Because of this, she is often thought of as “the most effective advocate for women in the Truman administration.” In 1948, India declined to chair the Democratic National Convention. She was still, however, a very close advisor to Harry Truman. In 1949, she sent a letter to President Truman that was influential in the appointment of the first woman judge in a District Court.

As India rose higher in politics, she received many important opportunities. She is thought to have been the first woman to be nominated for vice-president in U.S. history. In 1952, Adlai Stevenson chose her to be his running mate, but she declined the nomination. Five years later in 1957, India asked Harry Truman if she could write his memoirs. He agreed and told her to “tell the truth and pull no punches!” In 1977, her autobiography, *Pulling No Punches*, was published. The Women’s National Democratic Club subsequently held a luncheon in her honor where she debuted as an author. It was, coincidentally, held on the same day as her eighty-second birthday.

Being the innovative thinker that she was, India Edwards influenced and inspired many women. She once said, “Sometimes I felt like a ghoul. I'd read the obits, and as soon as a man had died, I'd rush over to the White House and suggest a woman to replace him.” She made it possible for many women to find better jobs, changed how men viewed women in politics, and accomplished many “firsts,” such as being the first woman nominated for vice-president. In the 1980s, India moved to California with her husband Herbert, and she still drove her own car at the age of 88. India Edwards died at the age of 94 in 1990. [From Andrew J. Dunar, "Edwards, India," *American National Biography Online*. 2000.

<<http://www.anb.org.proxy2.library.uiuc.edu/articles/index.html>>. (Aug. 24, 2008); "India Edwards," *Biography Resource Center*. 17 Dec. 2003. Gale. <http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/BioRC?vrsn=149&locID=uiuc_uc&ste=1>. (Sept. 8, 2008) ; Dorothy McCardle, "India Edwards, 82, Still 'Pulling No Punches'." *Washington Post* 16 June 1977: C3. *LexisNexis Academic*. LexisNexis. <<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe>>. (Sept. 11, 2008); and Martin Weil, "India Edwards, Pioneering Woman In Democratic Party, Dies at 94," *Washington Post*, Jan. 16, 1990: B5.

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